

BREAKING: NEW COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN RATIFIED!



President's Message

Dear valued members of the association,

Welcome back! A short few months ago, I wrote about the bittersweet feeling that came with the end of the school year, and now here we all are, back at our jobs, back working with our students, back in our buildings with our colleagues. For me, the beginning of the school year is more sweet than bitter, as I am a huge fan of new beginnings and new challenges. I feel fortunate this year to be in the same exact teaching assignment that I was last year — this is rare for me, having taught every grade from 4 to 8, plus K-8 Phys. Ed. and Music at various points in my 14 years as a teacher in this division! However, the familiarity of any teaching assignment is always balanced by having to discover the quirks and habits of a new group of students, and so it is true that learning doesn't ever stop when you're a teacher!

I was very excited to meet with as many of you as I could at the divisional professional development day early in September, but I left thinking that it was just the tip of the iceberg. There are many new faces that I still have yet to meet, and I hope the opportunity comes sooner than later to meet those that are new to the division and to our association. Welcome!

So, what's been happening in the association over the summer and in the month of September? Well... LOTS to be honest! I have but three columns to use here, but I have

been communicating many things on our Twitter (@seineriverteach) and Facebook (fb.me/seineriverteach) social media accounts, as well as on our web site (www.seineriverteachers.com). If you haven't been following us online, here's a taste of the past three months:

Summer Training

The Manitoba Teachers' Society hosted three events I was fortunate to attend in August. The PD Chairs conference and Summer Collective Bargaining School here held back-to-back at the wonderful Hecla Resort, and I was so happy to see our colleagues Rebecca Brown and Sandy Turcotte learning all about the bargaining process along with me. The following week featured President's Training at the Inn at the Forks, where not only was I continuing to find out how to be a better president for this association, I was also asked to participate in a panel discussion featuring two other association presidents and a president-turned-staff-officer. From the feedback I received from my colleagues, I can tell you that I represented this association with pride and spoke highly of our members.

SRTA Council Orientation

At our annual orientation for SRTA Council representatives, we started the day with coffee (thanks, Leslie Buffie!), greetings and introductions, where I found out we have ten new representatives to council this year! After a rousing game of Who Am I (thanks, Rebecca Brown!), we were treated to a wonderful presentation on the Pro-Union Movement (thanks, MTS Vice-President Norm Gould!) which was followed by a thoughtful and well-received presentation about the MTS Educator Assistance Program (thanks, EAP psychologist Angela Haig!). After an amazing lunch, we got down to business with our first council meeting of the year, where a budget was passed and a member dues rate

was set. Members will now contribute \$150 annually on a full-time basis (pro-rated for part-time), which is a 25% reduction from last year.

Collective Bargaining

A heartfelt thank you to the 51% of our membership who took the time on very short notice to travel to Dawson Trail on October 14th to cast a vote on our new Collective Agreement. The vote was 91% in favour of ratification. The highlights of the changes to the collective agreement, as well as an update from Collective Bargaining chair Pat Liss, can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.

Professional Development Fund

Allison Graham continues to do an amazing job at taking in your applications, getting them in the hands of the PD committee, and getting answers from them in a very timely basis — sometimes, within hours of the application being submitted! Her update is in this issue as well, and you can always stay on top of the money remaining in the fund by going to www.seineriverteachers.com/pd.

I'd love to hear from you!

While this is only a small selection of news items from the summer and September, you can already see just how busy we are at the association, working on your behalf. As always, any questions, concerns, suggestions or other items of interest you wish to discuss with me, please feel free to call or email. My hope is to build on the successes of last year, while also learning from the mistakes made along the way to be the best president I can be for you.

In solidarity, for each of you and for each other.

Jonathan Waite, President



Collective Bargaining Update

Seine River Agreement-in-Committee (Ratified)

The parties in Seine River reached an agreement-in-committee on October 7, 2014 which was subsequently ratified on October 14, 2014. The highlights are as follows:

- Effective Period: July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2017 (3 years).
- Salary Scale: 2014/15: 2%; 2015/16: 2%; 2016/17: 2% (NB: unless otherwise noted, these increases apply to all salaries, rates and allowances).
- Administrative Allowances: 2014/15: K-8 principals shall receive the higher base rate currently paid to 9-12 principals; all salary increases to apply.
- Sick Leave Days: Maximum accumulation to increase from 125 to 130 days.
- On-the-Job Injury: Division shall reimburse uncovered out-of-pocket expenses to a maximum of \$1,000. apply.
- Family Medical Leave: Expanded scope re: usage at discretion of Superintendent.
- Compassionate Leave: Up to two (2) days per year at no loss of pay are now available to attend funeral as pallbearer or mourner.
- Maternity/Parental Leave: Change adoptive to parental; application of Employment Standards Code to be included.
- Respectful Workplace: SRSD Policy in conjunction with WSH legislation to be included in C/A.
- President/Officer Leave: New article to be included in C/A; option of either 50% or 100% release.
- Extra-Curricular Leave: LOU to be attached to C/A providing 1 day of paid leave for performing 50 hours of extra-curricular activities.
- Substitute Teachers: Mileage allowance shall apply to substitute teachers travelling between worksites.
- Short Term Disability: New Article to be included in C/A that STD Plan shall be administered in accordance with attached LOU.
- PD Fund: 2014/15: To increase from \$75,000 to \$85,000; 2015/16: \$90,000; 2016/17: \$95,000; 2017/18: \$100,000.
- Report Writing/PD Time: LOU re: joint committee to study issue.

What a Long Strange Trip It's Been by Pat Liss, Collective Bargaining Chair

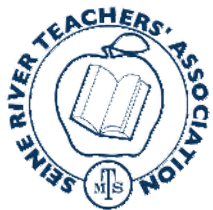
Well folks, it's a done deal. What started 3 years ago with me attending an occasional meeting with CB Chairs from metro divisions to discuss what would happen in future bargaining scenarios culminated October 14th with five dedicated members of SRTA calling in favors and cajoling friends to come in and vote so that our contract could be ratified before it went to the board at 7:30. We needed 169 members. We squeaked past 170 with minutes to spare.

We almost lost it. Had we not got those last few, last minute votes we would have been back to square one, waiting for a new board to get into place before we could start the whole process all over again. Looking back, I guess maybe we should not have been surprised at the less than stellar turnout. The response to our survey of members was far less than 50%. Apathy? Who knows.

But today, now that it's all said and done, I'm sitting here wondering why there was not a better turnout. Certainly there's lots of members out there with opinions on what the contract should have contained; what we should have been asking for; what direction we should have gone. Many of them were still offering up their advice on October 14th at the polls. And that's okay, except we could have used that input many months ago, because we wanted people to get involved. We wanted input. We wanted to be your voice. We wanted to put forward the best package we could based on what we believed our members wanted.

I believe that for the majority of the 170+ that voted yesterday we did done just that. And kudos to the members who made the trek to DTS and voted against the agreement. That is their right. But if you did not make the effort yesterday, knowing that you fully could have, then shame on you.

Three years from now the SRTA will be looking for another group of members to put together the next collective agreement. That will be your next chance to offer input. Do it.



EXECUTIVE 2014-2015



Jonathan Waite
President



Pat Liss
Vice President,
Collective Bargaining



Jennifer Catellier
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Eric Lindquist
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Education Finance



Wendy Chase
Employee Benefits,
Equity & Social Justice



Leslie Buffie
Health and Wellness



Allison Graham
Professional
Development



Rebecca Brown
Public Relations



Dan Lagacé
Resolutions



Kathy Dubesky
Workplace Safety
and Health

Get Involved on SRTA Committees

We have many committees which can use your help and efforts. If you are someone who wants to help your colleagues by discussing and shaping the work of the association, contact the chair of the committee to see how you can get involved. They are:

Pat Liss, Collective Bargaining Chair: bargaining@seineriverteachers.com

Jason Sparling, Education Finance Chair: edfinance@seineriverteachers.com

Wendy Chase, Employee Benefits Chair: benefits@seineriverteachers.com

Wendy Chase, Equity & Social Justice Chair: esj@seineriverteachers.com

Leslie Buffie, Health & Wellness Chair: health@seineriverteachers.com

Allison Graham, Professional Development Chair: pdchair@seineriverteachers.com

Rebecca Brown, Public Relations Chair: pr@seineriverteachers.com

Kathy Dubesky, Workplace Safety & Health Chair: wsh@seineriverteachers.com

Workplace, Safety and Health Report

October 2014

by Kathy Dubesky, WSH Chair

- Yearly Hearing Tests will begin for Music, Phys-Ed, and Industrial Arts teachers in the division.
- Letters were drawn up regarding Conservation of Hearing and were sent to Administration to remind staff to wear hearing protection.
- Non Essentials chemicals have been removed from the High School Science Labs.
- Extra guarding has been put in place on machines in the High Schools in the Industrial Arts Programs.
- A proposed schedule for site based WSH Committee's was presented at WSH divisional meeting. More information is to follow.

Health and Wellness

by Leslie Buffie, H&W Chair

Pedometer

Keep track of how many steps you take throughout a workout or the day. This could be used to help students meet activity goals (I will take ___ steps today), or you could combine it with a math lesson to graph data collected during a walk in the schoolyard (How many cm is Bobby's stride if he took 32 steps to walk 10 meters?).



"All I'm saying is we plug these into Excel, let it do its thing, and then we can all play until lunch!"

Employee Benefits

by Wendy Chase, Employee Benefits Chair

1. The Manitoba Public School Employees Dental and Extended Health Plan Trust

- Governed by 4 MTS Trustees, 4 MSBA Trustees, 1 Non-Teaching Trustee
- Trust created to allow for pre-tax benefit
- Health and Dental premiums are employer paid, funded by reductions in salary grids (reduced by family rate \$103.50 per month)
- Not for profit basis – any surplus belongs to the plan, not Blue Cross
- Rates and/or coverage can change every September
- Dental rates are based on local Association experience, Extended Health rates are based on provincial experience
- September 1, 2014 Renewal:
 - Blue Cross proposed a 1.3% Health increase and a 2.7% Dental increase
 - Negotiated health renewal was no change to rates
 - 65+ and Retirees with Travel Health rates increased by \$5/\$10 monthly improvement (travel coverage increased to 60 days per trip from 30)
 - Maximums for cardiac rehabilitation, orthotics, medical equipment and stretcher increased to \$500
 - Hearing aid coverage increased to \$2000/6 years from \$1000/3 years
 - Overall negotiated Dental renewal rates increased by 0.6%

2. Vision Care Options

- \$200/24 months/family member (\$3.40 single/\$10.20 family) pre tax: \$2.04/\$6.12
- \$300/24 months/family member (\$5.45 single/\$16.30 family) pre-tax: \$3.27/\$9.78
- Now premiums are pre-tax so actual cost is 60% of above cost

3. Short Term Disability

- If you are on a leave, life and disability insurance premiums are optional, but if not maintained and needed then no insurance exists
- When you are a claimant, life insurance premiums are waived, but insurance remains intact
- Pensionable service accrual continues when STD is paid
- Claims experience shows 1% of the population make a claim

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News from the Executive

(cont'd from page 4 Employee Benefits)

4. The Manitoba Teachers' Society Optional Life Plan

- School Division does not administer
- Available to active and retired MTS members and their spouses
- Sun Life insures
- **Why Do I Need It?**
 - Provides additional income security for your family
 - Top up coverage your spouse may have – is your spouse underinsured? (focus of the plan is for spouses)
 - Covers children also
 - Use as mortgage insurance (in most cases costs are lower than bank/credit union costs, coverage does not decline – but you can reduce)
 - You can continue coverage into retirement, when work based coverage stops, up to age 70
 - Coverage evolves with changing needs – you can apply to increase or decrease coverage as your needs change, such as birth of a child
- **How Does It Work?**
 - Up to \$300,000 each is available for you and your spouse
 - Up to \$50,000 per child under 18 or 25 if in school
 - If either parent is insured, \$10,000 per child is provided free
 - Coverage continues to age 70
 - Guaranteed insurability – up to \$50,000 is available without regard to health if you apply within 60 days of gaining a dependent (and have not previously been declined)
 - Coverage goes where you go – if your employment changes, you and/or your spouse can convert coverage to an individual policy without insurability within 31 days of termination
 - Optional Life premiums will be cheaper than individual plans
 - Can opt in at any time, requires proof of insurability unless related to life event



TRAF Report by Wendy Chase, Benefits Chair

Note: All school divisions will be deducting based on number of days paid in a month by September 2016 (required contributions)

Voluntary Contributions

- Operates like a separate retirement savings account
- Subject to limits under the Income Tax Act (Canada)
- Deducted from salary through school division
- Accumulate with interest at fund rate of return (last year rate of return was 13.68%)
- Can be converted to a monthly annuity at retirement, paid as a lump sum before retirement or used to purchase eligible service
- Calculator and Application are available on TRAF website
 - For more detailed info from Glen Anderson at the MTS, see page 13 of this newsletter

Considerations

- TRAF's investment strategy is focused on TRAF's long-term funding objectives and may not be consistent with your investment objectives and risk tolerance
- With an RRSP contribution, you can tailor your investments to meet your personal investment objectives and risk tolerance
- RRSP contributions are available for other uses such as Home Buyers' Plan and Lifelong Learning Plan
- Consult with a professional advisor prior to making decision



Contact us!



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Facebook: fb.me/seineriverteach

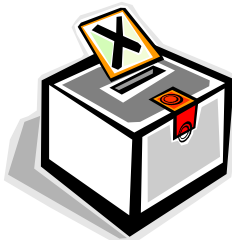


For Your Information

SRSD Trustee Elections

On October 22, 2014, people living within the boundaries of Ward 1 of the Seine River School Division will be going to polls to choose three school trustees for their region. Wards 2 and 3 have already been decided (Jessalyn Cahill, Christine Roskos and Jennifer Stefansson in Ward 2;

Theresa Bergson, Wes Keating and Ed Mantie in Ward 3) but with four candidates in the Ward 1 region, we took the opportunity to ask the candidates a few questions on behalf of our association members. Candidates Wendy Bloomfield, Gary Nelson and Greg Reid thanked us for giving them the opportunity to answer these questions. Candidate Neil Reavely did not respond to our request.



The Questions

1. *What education-based qualifications, skills and knowledge do you bring to the position that would make you an effective trustee?*

Wendy Bloomfield: I consider myself to be a life-long learner. I have a college diploma as well as a Certificate in Adult Education from the University of Manitoba. I continually attend workshops, conferences, etc. to broaden my knowledge, especially in the area of education. My experience in the worlds of child care and family services give me a very broad understanding of the issues facing children, families and schools.

Gary Nelson: My twenty-one years as a school trustee on the Seine River Board has probably provided me with the greatest resource for knowledge with respect to my role as school trustee. I also bring my knowledge and experience gained from profession as a union representative which included seventeen years as the Education Officer for the Manitoba Nurses Union.

Greg Reid: I hold both Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Social Work degrees. I have recently applied to commence work toward a Masters in Public Administration (MPA). I worked as a Social Work Clinician and Manager in the mental health field for 18 years before transitioning into healthcare administration. I have worked in healthcare for 23 years. I am currently Executive Director-East with Southern Health-Sante Sud (Regional Health Authority). In this role I am responsible for all healthcare services in the East Area of the region, and am a member of the Senior Management Team. I have been a Trustee on the Board of Seine River since 2002, was re-elected in 2006 and again in 2010. I have been an active member of all committees and currently serve as Chair of the Human Resources Committee of the Board.

2. *If elected what do you see as your first priority?*

Greg Reid: I am looking forward to re-election as I believe that we have built a solid foundation in Seine River on which we can continue to grow. I am excited about the emphasis our division places on staff development and the importance of data collection and basing our decisions on evidence. I believe that the Board has a solid relationship with both teachers and all staff in the Division, but I believe these relationships can be strengthened further in order to benefit all stakeholders in the Division. My priority would be to continue to advocate for more discussion and consultation with stakeholder groups both within and without the division in order to allow us to take the next step as a Division and community of learners.

Wendy Bloomfield: I am looking forward to re-election as I believe that we have built a solid foundation in Seine River on which we can continue to grow. I am excited about the emphasis our division places on staff development and the importance of data collection and basing our decisions on evidence. I believe that the Board has a solid relationship with both teachers and all staff in the Division, but I believe these relationships can be strengthened further in order to benefit all stakeholders in the Division. My priority would be to continue to advocate for more discussion and consultation with stakeholder groups both within and without the division in order to allow us to take the next step as a Division and community of learners.

Gary Nelson: I am very proud of the culture that exists in Seine River School Division and I like to believe that I have played a part in building that culture. My priority is to maintain and build upon the great culture that we have in Seine River. A culture where our children can learn in a safe and respectful environment from educators who have the necessary resources, skills, supports and passion to help those children succeed.

3. *What are your thoughts on the transferring of teachers, administrators, and other divisional employees from school to school within the workplace?*

Wendy Bloomfield: The short answer is that sometimes transfers need to happen for various reasons. I remember a teacher who was transferred against his will (over 20 years ago) telling me around the second month of the new school year that it was the best thing that happened to him and that he really couldn't "see the forest for the trees". I also believe though that transfers must take into consideration our core ethical values of honesty, empathy and respect.

Greg Reid: I believe that a certain amount of transfers will always be a necessary component of school divisions based solely on the nature of the business. However, I do believe that

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For Your Information

(cont'd from page 6 SRSD Trustee Elections)

decisions around transfers should always be done in consultation with the individual's impacted. Ultimately, we need to do what's best for the students in our schools, but we also need to do so in a careful and balanced manner. There is always the risk of too much upheaval if transfers are not weighed carefully, considering all individuals impacted.

Gary Nelson: Transfers can be a positive situation but I believe a key element to that is having buy-in from the individual being transferred. It is easy where transfers are initiated by a request from the employee, or as a result of a promotion applied for. Seine River School Division has a significant footprint and you don't want to end up in a situation where a transfer results in significant unwanted travel to go to work. I believe our administration has been cognizant of travel and other concerns that have arisen when looking at staffing assignments and have worked with staff to come up with win-win solutions. Administration does have the right to transfer staff but from my perspective it must be fair and reasonable in its application and shouldn't create an undue hardship for the employee. If an employee felt a reassignment or transfer was unreasonable they would be within their rights to appeal that decision to the Board and I would encourage them to use the process available to them.

4. What is the board's role in ensuring teacher wellness for our members?

Gary Nelson: The Board and Division have an important role in this and I believe Seine River School Division has been a proactive leader in education on this matter.

We established our Regenerative Leave Program many years ago. I know it has extended the careers of many of our teachers who have had the opportunity to step away from the demands of the classroom and focus on their health or personal issues that may have been compromising their health. I believe we are the only School Division that offers such a leave. I also believe it has been of great value to both our staff, the Division and our students.

Recently we created a Safety Officer position to ensure your workplace environment is a safer place to work and to identify potential hazards

or practices that might put our students and staff at risk.

We've provided the SRTA with significant, annual dollars to support its self-directed Professional Development Fund. Again I believe Seine River is the only Division to create such a partnership with its Teacher's Association and I think it has been of great benefit to both the teachers and the Division.

Greg Reid: The Board's role in ensuring teacher wellness is ensuring that the resources are made available in order to provide a comprehensive Wellness Program. The Board needs to demonstrate that wellness is a top priority at all times, which will be achieved by ongoing communication around wellness and the importance of it, the allocation of resources to wellness programs, and Board Representation on a Divisional Wellness Committee.

Wendy Bloomfield: Firstly the Board needs to ensure effective policies are in place that follow Workplace Safety and Health legislation. Policies such as respectful workplace, conflict of interest and staff recognition are important to ensuring the wellness of all employees. Two particular policies that I believe are very important to teachers' wellness is the Regenerative Leave policy and the Inclement Weather policy. The SRSD board and administration often take a lot of "heat" from other divisions for these two policies, but we will continue with them as the Board believes they are simply the right things to do.

5. What are some of the strategies you have for encouraging and maintaining communication between the board and teachers and the community?

Wendy Bloomfield: Communication is an area that I feel we struggle with from time to time. We are currently in the process of reviewing our communication policies and strategies to ensure they are effective. We are also reviewing the Community Education Committee as it seems like the interest in this committee has waned over the last few years. This is a "work in progress" however it is definitely a high priority for the Board.

Gary Nelson: I am one person working with the team on the Seine River Board and the Seine River School Division. No one person can

do it alone. When you have a team like we've had where there are no secret or political agendas, where people can feel trusted and respected to share their opinion and have open dialogue on issues that can be very difficult; positive relationships are built. We have to work at maintaining that culture and those kind of relationships every day.

At our first meeting of the School Board this September, I suggested that we attempt to meet with the SRTA before the Board election to see if there was an opportunity to conclude a new teacher's agreement. I felt that an early resolution to the matter would be positively received; I also feared that if there was significant change to the Board composition, that negotiations could become very long and protracted. I was pleased that the entire Board agreed with my suggestion and that the SRTA positively responded to our request. We now have achieved a tentative agreement and look forward to the possibility of having this matter concluded before the election.

I again appreciate the opportunity you have provided to share my thoughts and, subject to the wishes of the electorates of Ward 1, I look forward to another four years with the great team we have in the Seine River School Division.

Greg Reid: The Board, along with the SRTA and SRPA, have made some strides in recent years in maintaining communication both with the community and between each other. While these strides have resulted in better communication and improved relationships, we need to do more. I would advocate for more robust opportunities for communication between the Board and teachers; including but not limited to regularly scheduled meetings with jointly determined agendas, opportunities for consultation and feedback on key divisional decisions, joint forums to engage communities in meaningful dialogue regarding the strategic direction and planning for the division, and continued connections of the Board with parent level leadership in all schools.

Thanks to the candidates for taking time to answer our questions.

Don't forget to vote on October 22!



Increasing Student Motivation and Engagement in Reading

By Chasity Findlay, CSNC

This summer I had the opportunity to be part of a professional learning community while taking courses at the University of Manitoba toward my Masters of Education degree in Language and Literacy. My purpose for taking these courses was to participate in enlightening discussions with colleagues and instructors in order to expand my knowledge on literacy and to grow as an educator. I was looking forward to gathering new literacy strategies to apply to my teaching practice.



The first course that I took was Educational Research. This course, a requirement for all Masters of Education students, serves as a general introduction to the different types of quantitative and qualitative research designs and the ways that data is collected and analyzed. I learned a lot of new information about educational research designs in this class that will be valuable if I decide to pursue the thesis route for my Masters.

Seminar in Reading Processes was a two week intensive course that covered the history and current developments in the research and theory of reading and literacy, as well as the implications of this research and theory for teachers in their classroom practices. The course was led in a dynamic way that allowed students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. I prepared and facilitated a readers workshop, took part in my colleagues' readers workshops, participated in a special interest inquiry research group, and pursued a personal inquiry project. The instructor of this course allowed us to direct our own learning and choose our topics for inquiry. This allowed us to explore topics of personal interest that had relevance to our respective teaching practices, as well as to connect with other educators with similar interests. The instructor stressed the importance of the process of our learning, as opposed to the final product. In this way, the course was directed in a manner that was authentic to the way that we were encouraged to lead our own classes.

Some of the content that was covered included the history of various theories of reading, diagnostic techniques for reading difficulties, and literacy strategies that teachers can use to help students comprehend texts before, during, and after reading. The course also covered, in detail, the idea of looking at texts with a critical lens in order to promote social change, as well as the value of using 'real books' and other non-traditional literacy mediums such as blogging, podcasts, social media, family storytelling, and storytelling with toys. Course readings, including two textbooks filled with practical information and various journal entries, contributed to the understanding of the material that was taught in class. All of the course material hinged on the overarching idea that teachers need to 'reclaim reading' as they co-create authentic reading and learning experiences with students.

One of the course textbooks, *When kids can't read: What teachers can do, a guide for teachers 6-12* by Kyleene Beers is a fantastic, practical handbook for teachers that details various reasons why some students are dependent readers, offers a plethora of strategies to help transition these readers toward independent reading, and reveals glimpses into classrooms by presenting transcripts of actual conversations the author has had with students about reading. She stresses the importance of providing opportunities for dependent readers to develop cognitive, social and emotional, and text confidence in order to support them in becoming independent, motivated readers. I would highly recommend this book for all teachers as it is a great resource for gathering strategies to increase reading comprehension and engagement in any content area.

My summer course experiences were valuable to both my growth as a professional and learner as well as practical for my role as a classroom teacher. I'm heading back to the classroom armed with a variety of new literacy strategies that I can use to engage learners and promote the love of reading. I would recommend these courses to anyone enrolled in the Masters of Education program at the University of Manitoba.



1000hr Professional Yoga Therapist Program

Module One: Psychology of Yoga

June 19th - 22nd 2014

by Laura Nault

As a social work clinician in schools and YogaKids trained instructor, I have discovered hands on the many benefits of the application of yoga, mindfulness, and particularly breath work with students struggling with anxiety, depression, and attention or sensory issues. In fact, many have reported, both students and teachers alike, that the application of these strategies in the classroom or in a personal practice assists participants to manage the day to day stressors of school and life in general. Teaching children how to better understand the workings of their minds and bodies makes them better learners and managers of their emotions.

Imagine my excitement when I discovered a program for which I could qualify for admission that would allow me to pursue professional certification as a yoga therapist. I will graduate with a developed Yoga, wellness and stress management program that will meet the needs of people in all walks of life and its difficulties but its application to the educational setting and in my individual and group work with students will be very helpful. I also hope to offer teachers professional development opportunities to facilitate its application in the classroom and or to assist them as educators to manage the demands of working with students who may be experiencing mental health struggles.

My first module attended in June focused on Psychology of Yoga and was facilitated by Rolf Solvik, President and Spiritual Director of the Himalayan Institute. Rolf holds degrees in philosophy, music, Eastern studies, and clinical psychology. He is the author of "Moving Inward" and co-author of the award-winning "Yoga: Mastering the Basics." I've since read both his books as he was such a knowledgeable facilitator.

Topics covered during the four days of training provided the following:

- Better understanding of common psychological and psychosomatic disorders
- I was taught to clinically assess students psychological and emotional imbalances
- I was taught to integrate traditional yoga teachings with contemporary psychological/ social work principles.
- I learnt how to integrate meditation techniques to contemporary approaches to clinical work
- I was provided with appropriate yoga sequencing, breathing and meditation practices to alleviate emotional disturbances.



It is my plan to immediately apply these teachings to my work in schools in 2014/15. I will be using tools from this training as well as the "Learning to Breath" mindfulness curriculum in my work with groups in schools. It is my firm belief that with assistance children and adolescents can be taught to cultivate emotion regulation, attention/focus, and improved performance. I look forward to teaching these stress-reduction skills in classrooms as well. I work in the central schools of Seine River, please feel free to forward any questions or requests for more information to me at my office in College Lorette Collegiate, 204-878-2887 or by email.

I look forward to a very exciting 2014-15 school year applying my new skills and strategies to all that I do. This training I believe will also have a positive impact on my own capacity to manage the stress that can accompany working with children and adolescents and their families that are dealing with trauma and painful emotions.



The SAC/SAE Group Project

By SAC/SAE Teachers

This year, SAE and SAC teachers volunteered to be part of an SRTA group project to study various areas of our profession such as effective PD, creating a school culture of learning and collaboration. We met once a month for about an hour each time and the SRTA money was spent on teacher subs so that each teacher got a day to visit other classrooms. We used the book "Intentional Interruption" to guide our conversations. The following is feedback from various teachers, thanks.

For me, the key components of this Professional Learning Community (PLC) included: monthly meetings to address pertinent issues, provide feedback, and share ideas, regarding the educational direction of our school complex; open and encouraged discussion of mutual concerns at BOTH elementary and secondary levels by the educators directly involved; reading and referencing of the book "Intentional Interruption" which established a common base from which to focus our deliberations; and finally, strong support and understanding from teaching colleagues as well as administration to achieve the objectives of our group, listed above. It is my hope that the foundation established by this PLC group this past half year will continue to be built upon in the upcoming school year. The rationale and direction already set are most certainly worthy of further development!

The sharing of experience across schools was valuable, especially since we as classroom teachers often experience a vision of possibility that is confined to our classroom. The text was an excellent springboard for discussion, especially the sections that urged us to challenge the status quo rather than just looking for feedback to confirm our practice. The walkthroughs with Yvan allowed me to see evidence of learning in many different grade levels, but also showed me many

parallel practices that showed me that our struggles are not unrelated across grade levels. Above all, the discussions with Yvan and the group provided me with the opportunity to look at our complex and our role more holistically. I felt that my suggestions and insights were



valued as part of this team, and it was a rewarding professional learning practice that I hope to continue.

This was a very meaningful group that discussed pros and cons of current teaching practices and PD in our two schools. We engaged in thought provoking discussion that allowed us to challenge ourselves and each other to improve student engagement. We also had the opportunity to tour classrooms with our administrator to see different teaching styles/strategies as well as think critically about what is currently being done and where we need to improve as a staff to guide future PD.

The book, Intentional Interruption, was great. It was an easy read, yet thought provoking. The book challenged us to think about our own practices and our own "hang-ups" and to really identify what our challenges are that inhibit true change. So often, in many PD situations, great ideas are presented but the response is negative, or the teachers do not really change their practice. The book gives great insight as to why this happens and ways to try to avoid it/anticipate it/challenge it. I really appreciated the message that change is hard, but people need to push through it anyway. The belief that it is for the benefit of the students should be the driving force to that change.

Meeting with the team of teachers offered insight as well. Each teacher, while they welcomed the class visits, was concerned about how they came across to their peers. For me though, it confirmed that we have many good teachers. I saw students engaged and active, and welcoming classrooms that felt cozy. Sometimes we get bogged down with the day to day, and not every lesson is outstanding, but every child I spoke to knew what they were working on and why and could even talk about some of the challenges they were having in class. The PLC also created a "level playing field". As members of the PLC, we now have common language and knowledge to draw upon. It allows us to both challenge and receive comments regarding change.

This year I had the opportunity to participate in a Leadership group that consisted of staff from SAC and SAE. It was a great opportunity for me to be able to make contact with people that I work in the same building with but rarely have the opportunity to talk to. I found our time together valuable for many reason but I found the connections to be the most valuable. It was interesting to see what other people are doing in their rooms and to see that regardless of what grade we teach, we all share the same successes and concerns. *(cont'd on page 10)*



Professional Development Opportunities

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(cont'd from page 9 The SAC/SAE Group Project)

Being a part of this year's PLC group was a great experience - the elementary and high school staffs rarely find time to collaborate; however, our monthly meetings were extremely helpful in creating opportunities for this. I really enjoyed getting to know the high school teachers, as well as spending time with my own staff. We had great discussions surrounding effective PD, PGM's and goal setting, dealing with difficult student behaviour, and using constructive feedback from colleagues as a means of improving our teaching, rather than seeing it as a knock on our abilities. Reading "Intentional Interruption" allowed all of us to reflect on our attitudes surrounding learning and growing as teachers - and to truly take the time to think about how we can become more open to changing our old (and often static) ways. Finally, having the opportunity to shadow Yvan and see what his day looks like was a great idea - I loved visiting classrooms to see the amazing things going on, and it was interesting to discuss things that are completely out of my realm of consideration on a normal day - such as staffing, budgeting and proposals. All in all, I would love to be a part of another PLC, and think that all involved would agree that we're just getting started!!!

The Sisters - Daily 5 and CAFE Conference

March 28 and 29 - Chicago IL

By: Jenn Lapkin (DTS Grade 3)

Over Spring Break I was fortunate enough to be able to attend a two day conference in Chicago with "The Sisters", Gail Boushey and Joan Moser, learning about Daily 5 and Cafe. It was a fantastic experience. Both days were jam packed with new and useful information; linked to current research and best practice within our daily reading block.

The first day focused on Daily 5. It is a structure or blank framework for instruction, rather than the content itself. The 5 tasks are Read to Self, Read to Someone, Listen to Reading, Word Work and Work on Writing. The Sisters have recently released a second edition of their groundbreaking Daily 5 book; there are some clarifications, some revisions and more links to research - especially making connections to the work of John Hattie. A big point to note is that despite the name "Daily 5" there is no expectation to actually achieve all 5 activities each day, rather to think of it as: choose one of 3 meaningful reading activities, a writing activity and a small focus on word work within that writing time.

This was eye opening. For the last 3 years I have struggled with trying to get in as many of the "5" in as I could, always having to drop at least one, usually 2 and still feeling like I was rushing. I was cramming in Listen to Reading after recess and desperately trying to find a way to get them to do a full word work block without the substance to fill the time, and every day, feeling somehow defeated that I couldn't do what so many others seem to be able to. Learning that we can take more time to teach mini lessons between blocks, that we can create longer blocks and then have time while the kids are writing to conference with individuals or groups to do spelling mini lessons, catch up on some word sorts, practice sight word spelling WHILE doing Work on Writing was a big A-Ha!! moment for sure.

I love that The Sisters have now linked all of their teaching to John Hattie's work on visible learning. They talk about how each of their strategies links to what Hattie says about best practice for affecting student achievement. Modelling correct behaviours and clearly defining expectations during each block. Over the course of the day they spoke at length about how we can help our students set goals for behaviour and achievement, reflect on their accomplishments and revise their goals as needed to reach an objective.

Day 2 was all about CAFE. CAFÉ is an acronym for Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency and Expand vocabulary. Each heading was chosen because of how each associated skill set is a major contributor to a student's overall ability as a reader. Some students strength is fluency; they can read all the words on the page with expression and flow; however, ask the about what they read and they look at you blankly. "I was supposed to LISTEN to myself?" they seem to ask silently. Others may remember every detail of the story they just read, but sound choppy or robotic as they read. Then there are the students who simply read too

(cont'd on page 11)



Professional Development Opportunities

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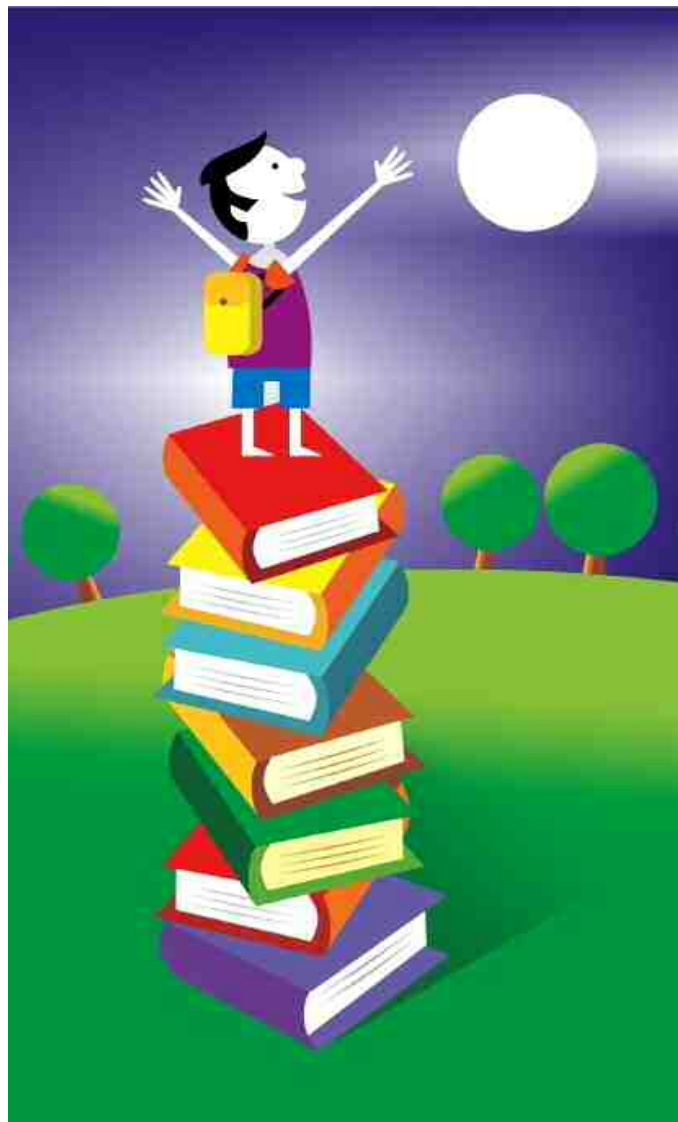
(cont'd from page 11 The Sisters - Daily 5 and CAFE Conference)

quickly, they don't seem to stop and check for meaning as they read, or your kids who seem to have been born with a love for reading and innate ability that even their parents are at a loss to explain.

The main difference between CAFE and traditional Guided Reading is that instead of grouping students by reading level, you would group them by reading SKILL...what specific skills do they need instruction for to become better readers? This also means that we would have children of different reading levels in our instruction groups. In my classroom, I have a comprehension group with students ranging from just below to well over grade level. My Accuracy group is my most homogenous, as I have found that kids who struggle with accuracy tend to struggle in similar ways when it comes time for the levelled tests; its not their comprehension strategies that are keeping them from moving up a level, and while they may not have the fluency skills they will need either, it isn't the priority skill they need to improve. Fluency is about teaching the students to read...well...fluently. We know that a fluent reader is more likely to make meaning than a non-fluent reader and they are also going to be more accurate as they read. Are you seeing how all of the skills seem to intertwine? It took me a while, but throughout the day I was able to make even more connections.

CAFE is about knowing your students as readers and finding a skill to focus on with them during reading. It goes back to goal setting. Each day, you would try and meet - individually or in small groups - with as many of the students as you can. Ideally, your weakest students will have daily sessions, while some of your more independent readers will need less frequent check-ins. At the beginning and end of each session you should discuss goals and success criteria with students. Ask them how they are measuring their own success as they read independently. Have them reflect on the process they have experienced while implementing the skills you have taught.

This brings us around to another important element of the program, the Pensieve. The Sisters have now gone digital! The web app created by The Sisters' own daughters is concise and easy to use. It makes for very targeted note taking that leaves the teacher with a clear record of each reading session with a minimum of writing. They even have pictures to help you remember what to write! The app accommodates both group



work and individual sessions, and gives teachers a wealth of information to pull from when writing reports or speaking with parents with the capability to print written reports with an upgraded subscription. There is even areas designated for all of your other subjects to help with all of your classroom note keeping. Participants each received a 3 month subscription to the CC Digital Pensieve!!

It was a wonderful 2 days. Each participant received 6 books and gifts to help with implementation of both Daily 5 and CAFE in our classroom. We were left feeling filled with enthusiasm for teaching literacy skills to our students and with a real sense of solid research backing up our new ideas. I highly recommend a "Sisters" workshop for anyone looking to be inspired about teaching reading and writing to our students!!



FIT (French Immersion for Teachers)

by Kaitlan Robertson

This summer, through the financial support of the Seine River Teacher Association I was able to attend an intensive, three week summer program at the Université de Saint-Boniface. The Université de Saint-Boniface has put together a French program specifically for teachers. The FIT or French Immersion for Teachers program specializes in providing instruction on how to better teach French. This course focuses on both language instruction and francophone culture. Similar to our curriculum, they have a heavy oral focus, with minimal written work.

The program consists of 8 levels: Debutant A, Debutant B, Debutant C, Debutant D, Intermediate A, Intermediate B, Advanced A, & Advanced B. After completing an oral placement test and students are placed in an ability appropriate level. During the course, students are able to complete two levels.

Every class has one instructor, who explains on the first day that they will be instructing this course in immersion, and thus speaking as little English as possible. Even during our coffee breaks, we were strongly encouraged to attempt to speak to our peers in French. The first week can be fairly overwhelming and exhausting. If nothing else, it is a great reminder to all teachers of how our EAL students must feel during their first weeks at school in Manitoba. However, it is surprising how

quickly your brain can start thinking in French in this environment.

The beginning of the course focuses on grammar and vocabulary comprehension. This is followed by constructing a project or activity to teach another group in the program. Throughout the course, the instructors are continually attempting to supply you with games, activities, and projects that can be easily transferred to our own classrooms. After a week and a half, you are evaluated and may be promoted to the next level. Although the program is a pass or fail course, very little emphasis is placed on assessment and much more so on what we can improve on.

I would encourage other teachers to take advantage of this summer course, especially if you have little or no academic French training. I found the beginner courses very quick and helpful. It is also extremely hands on with French clubs and activities to strengthen your French language learning in more authentic tasks. If you are discouraged by the idea of giving away some of your well-earned summer break, the Université de Saint-Boniface also offers a fall and spring course called mini-FIT.



Place-Based Inquiry in the EY Classroom

by Joanne Vielfaure-Romaniuk, Social Worker

I had the pleasure to take a 1 week (full days) class this summer held in the heart of the Exchange District - Arts Junction. Wow, what an incredible experience to be part of a classroom that was on Place Based Inquiry in the Early Years Classroom - a fascinating subject on its own; but Professor Bell-Stuart added a twist and made the inquiry through the Art lens!!

There are many ways to teach a classroom and for children to learn. All children can and will learn; and with some students, it takes lots of different tools! When there are many layers of difficulties and complexity with a child (or a classroom) and they require additional resources; we need to look at our toolkits!

The most common place our children are learning is in the classroom; and in this course, through Andrea's lectures coupled with many readings; this may not always be the best

setting for children. Therefore, the outdoors should be used regularly and differently! Being outside of our comfort zone is extremely challenging; however it has given me the opportunity to explore places I would have never imagined.

The richness of the outdoors is an incredible gift that we can give to our children; this to me is so important for the children's well-being and I really embraced this concept in this course.

The research demonstrated the emotions that can be developed outside and how children can deal with their emotions outdoors is extremely successful! I am thrilled to explore this avenue starting the new 2014-2015 school year with students; it will be my newest tool that I will share at no cost!! Furthermore, the usage of various art techniques will also help me reach out to a different group of children that I previously had difficulty connection with.

Hence, being part of a community of learners is an opportunity for all to drive change to enhance the education and well-being of our students!



**The
Manitoba
Teachers'
Society**

Making Additional Voluntary Contributions to TRAF

Did you know that you can make additional voluntary contributions (AVCs) to TRAF in addition to your regular TRAF contributions?

AVCs do not impact your TRAF pension formula, but are rather like a separate retirement savings account. Making an AVC this year will reduce your allowable RRSP contribution room next year by the same amount.

The Income Tax Act (Canada) permits AVCs up to the lesser of:

- 18% of your salary, less your pension adjustment, or
- The Money Purchase limit as prescribed by the Income Tax Act (Canada).

Under the TRAF program, this limit is reduced by an administrative “cushion” to ensure you do not inadvertently exceed your limit and incur penalties under tax laws.

AVCs are credited with TRAF’s investment rate of return (positive or negative). While making AVCs enables you to take advantage of TRAF’s comprehensive investment program and low administrative costs. It is important to know that TRAF’s

investment strategy is focused on the long-term funding objectives of the pension plan and may not be consistent with your investment objectives and risk tolerance. However, AVC’s will be charged the same Investment Management fees as TRAF which are significantly less than those charged by retail Investment managers.

The balance in the account can be converted to a monthly annuity at retirement (not eligible for cost of living adjustments), paid as a lump sum prior to retirement (as cash, less withholding tax, or transferred to your RRSP) or used to purchase eligible service with TRAF.

If you wish to make an AVC, it must be deducted from your salary as a payroll deduction. You may increase, decrease or discontinue this deduction at any time.

To make AVCs, use the Additional Voluntary Contribution Calculator to determine the amount you are allowed to contribute and then complete the Additional Voluntary Contribution Application. The calculator and application can be found on the TRAF website at www.traf.mb.ca.

It’s always a good idea to consult a professional advisor before making a decision.

For further information you can contact TRAF, at 204 949 0048 or 800 782 0714 and ask for a member services representative, or Glen Anderson, MTS Staff officer benefits, at 204 831 3052 or 866 494 5747.

Upcoming Dates



SRTA Council meeting: November 25, 2014
Room 23 DTS, 4:30 pm

South Central Presidents’ Council:
October 24, 2014, McMaster House

SRTA Executive meeting: November 12, 2014
Chicken Chef Lorette, 4:30 pm

Presidents’ Council: October 25, 2014
McMaster House

MTS Provincial Executive: October 22-23,
2014
McMaster House

MTS Maternity and Parental Rights Seminar
October 28, 2014
Dawson Trail School

SRSD Board Meetings: October 28, November
12 & 25, December 9, 2014
Division Office

Eastern Pre-Retirement Seminar (by invite)
November 29, 2014 8 am to 12 noon
Ste. Anne Collegiate



The
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Teachers'
Society

2014–2015 Workshops

Enhancing Pedagogy

FAB 5 + 2 EdChats*

Dates: October 22–23, 2014

Presenter: Various

An evening and full-day of workshops designed for all teachers in their first five years. Sessions include classroom management, assessment and reporting, positive learning environments, building parent partnership, and effective instruction. Followup EdChats on January 14, 2015 and April 8, 2015.

Aiming for Student Engagement

Date: November 24, 2014

Presenter: Dr. Danielle Fullan Kolton and field practitioners

To help teachers to create methods for designing and promoting student voice, inquiry, collaboration, and learning.

Aiming for Classroom Management

Date: March 9, 2015

Presenter: Blake Stephens

Participants will explore prevention and intervention strategies to balance student needs while building positive relationships with students, enhancing engagement and motivation, managing classroom dynamics and building democratic class cultures.

Universal Design for Learning: Literacy and Numeracy in the UDL Classroom

Dates: December 1–2, 2014

Presenter: Dr. Jennifer Katz

Focusing on writing and math instruction for diverse learners, participants will learn to develop goals that will help diverse learners to think deeply and profoundly about literature, multi-media text and mathematical concepts

Teaching to Diversity: Universal Design for Learning and Implementation for Aboriginal Education

Date: December, 2015

Presenter: Dr. Jennifer Katz

The Three Block Model of UDL will be explained to help connect our current education system to that of Aboriginal practices of the past such as recognizing the need to balance development of individual pride with a sense of responsibility and respect for the community.

Building Leadership Capacity

Learning and Growing as a Teacher Leader

Dates: October 3, 2014 and January 16, 2015

Presenter: Dr. Cathryn Smith

To support teachers who do not have a formal leadership position but who are called upon to lead within and beyond their classrooms.

Supervision & Evaluation

Dates: October 16–17, 2014

Presenter: Various staff and field practitioners

Developing knowledge and skills for supervising and evaluating teachers. Included: legal and policy parameters, progressive discipline, and approaching supervision from a developmental, learning-focused position.

So You Think You Can Lead? Lessons for Aspiring and Beginning Leaders

Dates: December 4–5, 2014

Presenter: Dr. Danielle Fullan Kolton and field practitioners

Designed to introduce aspiring or early-service principals/vice principals to the basics of school administration including time management, building a culture of trust and collegiality, increasing awareness of relevant legislation and dealing with difficult people.

Learning-Focussed Conversations

Dates: April 13–14, 2015

Presenter: Dr. Laura Lipton

Skills for guiding conversations to increase the ability to think deeply about instructional choices and how they affect students' learning. Topics include: conversation structures and communications tools and using classroom observational data, to focus conversations and improve teacher effectiveness.

Leadership for Teacher Well-Being

Date: October, 2015

Presenter: TBA

This workshop is intended to illustrate the connection between the mental and physical well-being of teachers. Participants will explore and interact with topics such as setting boundaries, self-care, life balance, resiliency, and stress management.

Creating Inclusive Classrooms and Schools

Total Participation Techniques with English Language Learners

Dates: November 3–4, 2014

Presenter: Dr. Persida Himmele

Over two days participants will be introduced to a five-part, research based framework that teachers can use to help students with English as an additional language, and all students, attain greater language skills and deeper content comprehension.

3 Rs of Successful School Counselling

Dates: January 26–27, 2015

Presenter: Carolynne Pitura

The focus will be on relationships, records and referrals, the foundation of a successful and sustainable School Counsellor program.

Support and Intervention for Behaviour Challenges

Dates: February 9–10, 2015

Presenter: Spencer Clements and field practitioners

An examination of strategies and tools for addressing targeted and intensive behavioural needs. Facilitators are behaviour resource teachers, counselors, and teachers with expertise and experience in this field.

Cultural Proficiency

Dates: April 16–17, 2015

Presenter: Sarah Gazan and Dr. Chris Brown

Designed to understand the four tools of cultural proficiency to help create organizational policies and practices to enhance relationships between teachers, administrators, and parents.

There is a \$67.50 fee for each one-day workshop, and a \$135 fee for each two-day workshop, with a minimum of 15 confirmed registrants required three weeks prior to the scheduled date of the workshop. Registration and payment occurs online at www.mbteach.org.